

5. COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Community and institutional stakeholders' perspectives are vital to creating a successful truck management program for the District. The goal of the stakeholder interviews was to identify interests or concerns that should be considered in the design of motor carrier management initiatives.

A detailed catalogue of every truck issue and problematic location within the District is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the assessment of the impacts of truck issues and potential policy solutions on stakeholders is crucial to understanding the truck issues confronting the District, and to the development of a feasible truck management plan that addresses the needs of businesses and residents alike. Towards that end, interviews were conducted with members of the following organizations:

Neighborhood Groups:

- ANC members representing Wards 1-8

Government Agencies (Local, Regional, and Federal):

- Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development
- Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
- City Council of the District of Columbia
- District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department
- District of Columbia Office of Planning
- District of Columbia Department of Public Works
- District Department of Transportation
- District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles
- District of Columbia Department of Health
- District of Columbia Emergency Management Administration
- District of Columbia Office of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland State Police
- Virginia State Police
- The National Park Service and U.S. Park Police
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Federal Highway Administration Division Office
- National Capital Planning Commission
- Office of Hazardous Material Safety, Research and Special Projects Administration, US DOT

5.2 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

5.2.1 Neighborhoods

Community stakeholder perspectives were compiled from feedback provided by ANC Chairpersons who either attended their respective Ward Transportation Policy Committee meetings or responded to a DDOT Motor Carrier Management and Threat Assessment ANC Questionnaire. In addition, a DDOT planner from each of the eight wards accompanied Volpe on a “ward drive-through” to highlight major truck issues and locations of concern for their respective wards. The intent was to identify the relevant truck issues and their impacts on the community, particularly neighborhood residents. The specific details of problematic corridors or intersections are listed in Appendix A. The compiled questionnaire responses are listed in Appendix B.

Based upon feedback received from the Ward Transportation Policy Committee meetings, questionnaire responses, and the ward drive-throughs, the following recurring themes were identified:

- Double-parking/loading zone problems
- Insufficient truck restriction enforcement
- Border restriction mismatches
- Truck traffic volumes and speeding
- Construction-related noise and vibration
- Cut-through traffic
- Garbage trucks
- Problem intersections
- Truck traffic in residential neighborhoods

Maps of each of the eight wards are coded with the above issues for those locations identified by the ANC representatives and ward planners (see Appendix C). Generally, the themes represent the overarching truck-related issues the District’s neighborhoods face. The following sections complement the maps in Appendix C with a brief narrative overview of the issues identified in each ward.

Ward 1

Due north of downtown Washington, Ward 1 is a mixed urban and residential area with relatively few industrial facilities and no highway access. Small in land mass but densely populated, Ward 1 experiences some of the heaviest truck traffic within the commercial/retail corridor of U Street, between 10th and 14th Streets, and along 14th Street itself. **Loading, unloading, and double-parking** were identified as the major issues confronting this ward, especially a lack of appropriate loading zones along streets including Calvert Street, Mount Pleasant Street, 18th Street, Columbia Road, and Florida Avenue. **Pedestrian safety hazards and noise disturbances** on streets like Georgia Avenue and Irving Street were also identified as concerns.

Ward 2

Directly south of Ward 1, the Ward 2 boundaries cover the central hub of the District's corporate and government activities, as well as part of the U.S. Capitol grounds. Consequently, much of the truck traffic entering this portion of the District is there to deliver supplies or parcels to office buildings, businesses, and restaurants. **Heavy traffic congestion** on I, K, L, and M Streets, as well as Connecticut Avenue, is the prominent concern for commuters and business people alike. While the congestion is not exclusively due to trucks, the **double-parking and loading/unloading** of truck deliveries along those corridors exacerbate already congested traffic conditions. The four-lane roadways plus the service lanes moving in both directions can often be reduced to one lane due to the trucks lining both curbsides of the service lane medians. M Street in Georgetown was cited as having a particular problem with trucks double-parking while making deliveries to local businesses.

Residents also identified **un-enforced truck restrictions** as particularly problematic, such as along Q Street within the Georgetown neighborhood in the northwestern corner of Ward 2. Many felt that improvements in **signage and enforcement of existing restrictions** would make a marked difference in addressing their truck-related concerns. Aside from the Georgetown area, the need to better enforce the designated truck routes for trucks bound for the Convention Center was also repeatedly pointed out.

Ward 3

Located to the northwest of Wards 1 and 2 and bordering Maryland, Ward 3 is a patchwork of established residential neighborhoods situated between busy retail and commercial corridors. The dominant truck issue raised by Ward 3 residents was the amount and extent of **truck cut-throughs** and the resultant **noise, vibration, pollution, and safety hazards** associated with high truck activity on residential streets. The neighborhoods particularly affected are located between major commercial thoroughfares, such as the parallel arterials of Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues. Dotted with as many stores as there are types of products and services sold, these major corridors carry the bulk of truck traffic within the ward. **Inadequate loading zone space and management** along the arterials exacerbates severe traffic congestion, which induces trucks to spill over onto neighboring streets and alleyways.

Likewise, residents felt that trucks cut through residential streets to avoid **poorly designed or heavily congested intersections**. For instance, the left-turn restriction from Military Road onto Western Avenue causes trucks to cut down Jennifer Street, which is a narrow residential street that is also classified as a collector road. Ward 3 residents identified noise pollution and vibration caused by **construction vehicles** headed to new developments, or by **early morning/late night deliveries** to restaurants as other truck issues of concern.

Ward 4

Ward 4 lies at the northernmost section of the District, sharing the majority of its northwestern and northeastern borders with the State of Maryland, and its southwestern border with Ward 3. The area is primarily residential, with increasing commercial activity and traffic towards the southern portion of the ward. Military Road, which turns into

Missouri Avenue, is one of the District's primary east-west routes, and runs through the heart of the ward as well as through Rock Creek Park. Ward 4 residents identified **heavy truck traffic, speeding, and problematic intersections** along Military Road/Missouri Avenue as their foremost concern. Unlike the more commercial and industrial land uses of the wards to the south, Ward 4 has its major thoroughfares like Military Road/Missouri Avenue, Colorado Avenue, and Riggs Road pass through traditionally residential neighborhoods. Residents are concerned about the **pollution and safety hazards** caused by such heavy truck traffic through their neighborhoods. While these trucks do not necessarily have commercial destinations within Ward 4, these routes are essential for truck deliveries to other destinations within the District.

Ward 5

With one of the largest land areas of all the District's wards, Ward 5 houses the most **industrial activity** within the District. The industrial facilities there range from major food and beer distributors to garbage transfer stations to a major parcel delivery distribution center. Many of the area's streets are major delivery routes that experience **heavy truck traffic**. The Florida Avenue Wholesale Market at 4th Street NE is one such major hub of truck traffic. The area surrounding the Market is interspersed with residential neighborhoods that experience trucks **cutting through** from one major truck route to the next. **Speeding** along corridors like Eastern Avenue and South Dakota Avenue was also identified as truck problems for the ward.

Ward 6

Buffering the industrial activities of Ward 5 and the corporate activities of Ward 2, Ward 6 consists of both residential and commercial uses, in addition to housing Union Station and part of the U.S. Capitol complex. Within the ward, many of the retail and restaurant destinations for truck deliveries are located on H Street, which residents identified as a major area of **double parking and loading zone** concerns. Additionally, residents voiced concern over **truck noise** due to the rumble of tires over potholes or due to airbrakes, **truck vibration** which causes some masonry to crack, **pollution, speeding, and safety hazards** along collector streets running through residential neighborhoods such as C Street and Constitution Avenue NE. **Heavy truck congestion** exists along east-west corridors like C Street and Constitution Avenue NE and north-south corridors like 8th, 11th, and 14th Streets. Eighth Street, in particular, poses a potential safety problem because of the many oil tankers that use the street to reach gas stations in the area. If truck traffic through residential areas is unavoidable, residents' preferred alternative would be to establish truck routes on streets with larger building setbacks such as on East Capitol Street or Massachusetts Avenue.

Ward 7

Ward 7 is situated in the eastern-most section of the District, and is primarily a residential area with some pockets of industrial and commercial activity on streets such as Minnesota Avenue and East Capitol Street. Residents pointed out that truck **double parking** and **loading/unloading** issues are a major contributor to the **heavy congestion** they experience within their ward. The contribution of trucks to generally congested conditions are at the forefront of the issues residents face within the ward, along with the concern of truck **cut-**

throughs. Trucks are consistently cutting through neighborhoods between principal arterials, such as East Capitol Street and Eastern Avenue, and between Eastern Avenue and Minnesota Avenue.

Ward 8

Covering the southernmost end of the District, Ward 8 consists primarily of residences with a few institutional and commercial areas. Due to its location near the Maryland line and Interstate 295, and due to the relative lack of commercial activity within the ward itself, most of the truck traffic in Ward 8 is **through-traffic**. Residents also noted that truck traffic passes through Ward 8 because of the effects of other truck restrictions, such as those on Suitland Parkway. Residential streets are often in **poor condition**, exacerbating the **vibration** and **noise** issues.

5.2.2 Governmental Organizations

The opinions of government agency stakeholders were gathered via personal interviews with representatives of each of the organizations and offices listed above. These stakeholders drew attention to specific issues and difficulties related to governing the flow of motor carrier traffic. Volpe compiled these issues and identified a number of common themes, summarized in the sections below.

Balancing Policy Priorities

Most cities face a tradeoff in preserving reliable truck access while respecting neighborhood concerns about traffic and noise. In the District, however, this dilemma is particularly acute because of the administration's well-publicized goal of promoting the District's ongoing economic revitalization and preserving a favorable investment climate. City planners are working to attract commercial tenants and new housing units to booming areas of the city, such as the area around 14th and U Streets NW. All of this implies potential growth in the volume of truck traffic, particularly (over the near term) in construction-related traffic. Since the city government also remains committed to maintaining residents' quality of life and to addressing neighborhood concerns, motor carrier management strategies will need to be carefully designed to strike a balance between these competing interests.

Administrative Complexity

According to the stakeholders, the District handles trucks in a way that is both administratively complex and somewhat different from the approach of most states. While coordination with Federal agencies such as FHWA and FMCSA is reported to work fairly well, local coordination tends to be more problematic. Truck-related issues fall under a wide spectrum of agencies ranging from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for licensing, to the Fire Department for hazardous cargo issues, to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) for weight-based registration plates and tandem trailer permits.

A few government stakeholders identified the need to consolidate more trucking-related functions within one agency for the sake of governmental efficiency. For example, it would make sense to regroup the policy and enforcement sides of parking regulation into the same office. It is also hoped that increased governmental coordination would help trucking

companies operate safely and legally, by cutting down on complexity and reducing the number of agencies with which they have to conduct business.

Inspection and Enforcement Issues

The MPD is responsible for the enforcement of weight and speed regulations. Despite the best efforts of the MPD's Motor Carrier Unit, truck violations tend to be a low priority for a police department that faces high levels of violent crime. It is also difficult to attract and retain officers for the Motor Carrier unit, in part because of the amount of training involved and the tedious work of checking log books. As a result, trucking firms perceive the District as more lax than neighboring Maryland and Virginia when it comes to enforcing weight and other restrictions. Many firms calculate that paying any fines is more cost-effective than meeting size and weight standards. Firms who are involved in illegal dumping are more likely to perpetrate their crimes within the District.

Furthermore, dense land use in the District makes it difficult for inspectors and MPD officers to stop trucks for inspections or violations. There simply is a dearth of easily accessible off-road locations that law enforcement officer can use to safely pull trucks over.

Part of the difficulty in boosting enforcement is that, for reasons relating to occupational safety, the police must rely on DPW laborers to move their portable truck scales. This is an inefficient arrangement, both because it reduces the ability of the police to move quickly and because the DPW crews are not authorized to write tickets. The police would also like to be able to employ civilians who would be empowered to write tickets for motor carrier violations.

Excess Weight and Infrastructure Maintenance

Excess weight is a major contributor to roadway damage. Since most dump truck operators are paid by the ton, they have an incentive to under-report their weight and to haul as heavy a load as the truck can bear. One of the stakeholders made the case that weight-related fines need to be raised significantly to change the widespread impression among haulers that it is ultimately cheaper to accept tickets from overweight operations than to operate legally. As a practical matter, it should be noted that the District currently does not have a facility for a truck to off-load items, even if is overweight.

Garbage Trucks

Garbage trucks cause noise and vibration and often operate at otherwise quiet hours. According to city regulation, trash haulers are generally not permitted to operate earlier than 7 AM. Since the city does not provide collection for residences with more than three housing units, 25-30 private trash trucks are traversing the same streets on any given morning.

Loading Zones and Alleys

Stakeholders expressed a need for better loading zone designations to provide improved short-term parking for passenger cars in the central business district, as well as to meet the loading and unloading needs of delivery trucks. Some stakeholders expressed concern over the loss of alleyways and parking spaces. Current city law allows property owners to

petition for the removal of an alley if they own the property on both sides. At present, the city is losing about one alley per month, decreasing the number of off-street loading areas.

Education and Outreach

Stakeholders found that there are opportunities to improve public information and awareness on truck-related issues. To give one example, many companies are unaware that in addition to a commercial driver license (CDL), drivers need to hold a valid medical certificate to operate any commercial vehicle over 10,000 pounds.

Regional Coordination

A number of stakeholders mentioned the increasingly regional nature of commerce and transportation issues. As such, improving motor carrier management is important not only for the District itself, but also for the broader metropolitan area and Maryland and Virginia. Improved coordination would be one step; stakeholders mentioned that Maryland, Virginia, and the District have different sets of weight limits and truck restrictions.